



The President's Daily Brief

25 May 1970

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Cambodian developments are discussed on *Page 1*.

Allied actions in Cambodia have seriously disrupted Communist forces that normally operate just west of Saigon. (*Page 3*)

Reports of an Israeli buildup on the Lebanon border are feeding Beirut's apprehensions over further Israeli reprisals. (*Page 4*)

The Cyprus Government has reacted swiftly to the latest upsurge of violence in the Greek Cypriot community. (*Page 5*)

In southern Laos, government forces have retaken an important guerrilla base. (*Page 6*)

The situation in Argentina is touchy following recent student demonstrations. (*Page 6*)

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CAMBODIA

South Vietnamese troops, in their deepest move into Cambodia to date, continue to clear main roads in Kompong Cham Province. They also are searching the southern edge of the country's major rubber plantation at Chup for elements of the 272nd Viet Cong Regiment; intercepts indicate that the regiment's headquarters moved southward from Chup on 22 May. The US Embassy in Phnom Penh reports that an apparently uncoordinated South Vietnamese air strike on Saturday against the Chup plantation may have caused the loss of almost half of Cambodia's rubber production; in addition, 5,000 workers probably will lose their jobs. West of Chup, Khmer Krom troops are reported to have recaptured the town of Tonle Bet against stiff enemy resistance.

In the northeastern province of Ratanakiri, the Communists again attacked the capital, Lomphat, on 23 May. Reinforcements and supplies for the town must be airdropped because overland access routes have been cut. Intercepts indicate that some enemy forces subordinate to the North Vietnamese B-3 Front--the Communist command authority in the central highlands of South Vietnam--recently have moved deeper into Ratanakiri, and enemy elements have been reconnoitering in areas north of Lomphat. Farther north, government troops at the Labansiek regional command post repulsed an attack by an enemy force of unknown size on 23-24 May. Labansiek, Lomphat and Bokheo have been under steady Communist pressure in recent weeks.

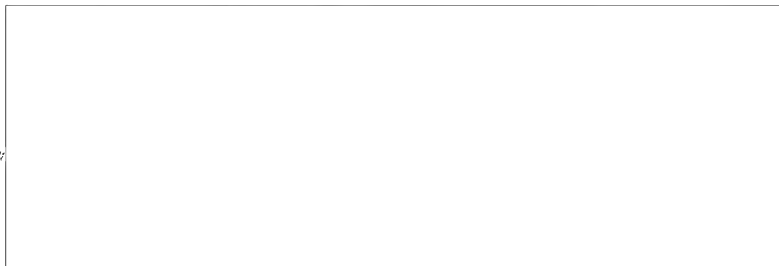
Allied sweep operations in the south have reduced enemy attacks there, but large enemy troop concentrations are reported in Prey Veng Province. On the coast, press reports say that South Vietnamese forces have pushed close to the port of Kompong Som (Sihanoukville) and have captured a cement factory near Kampot.

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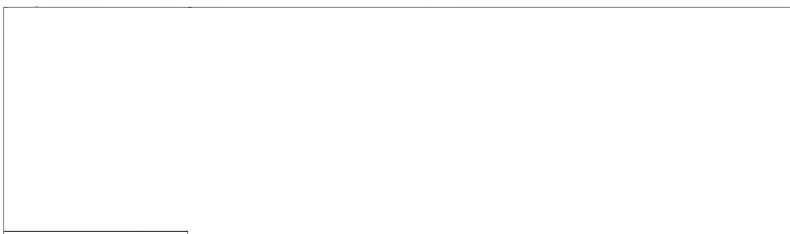
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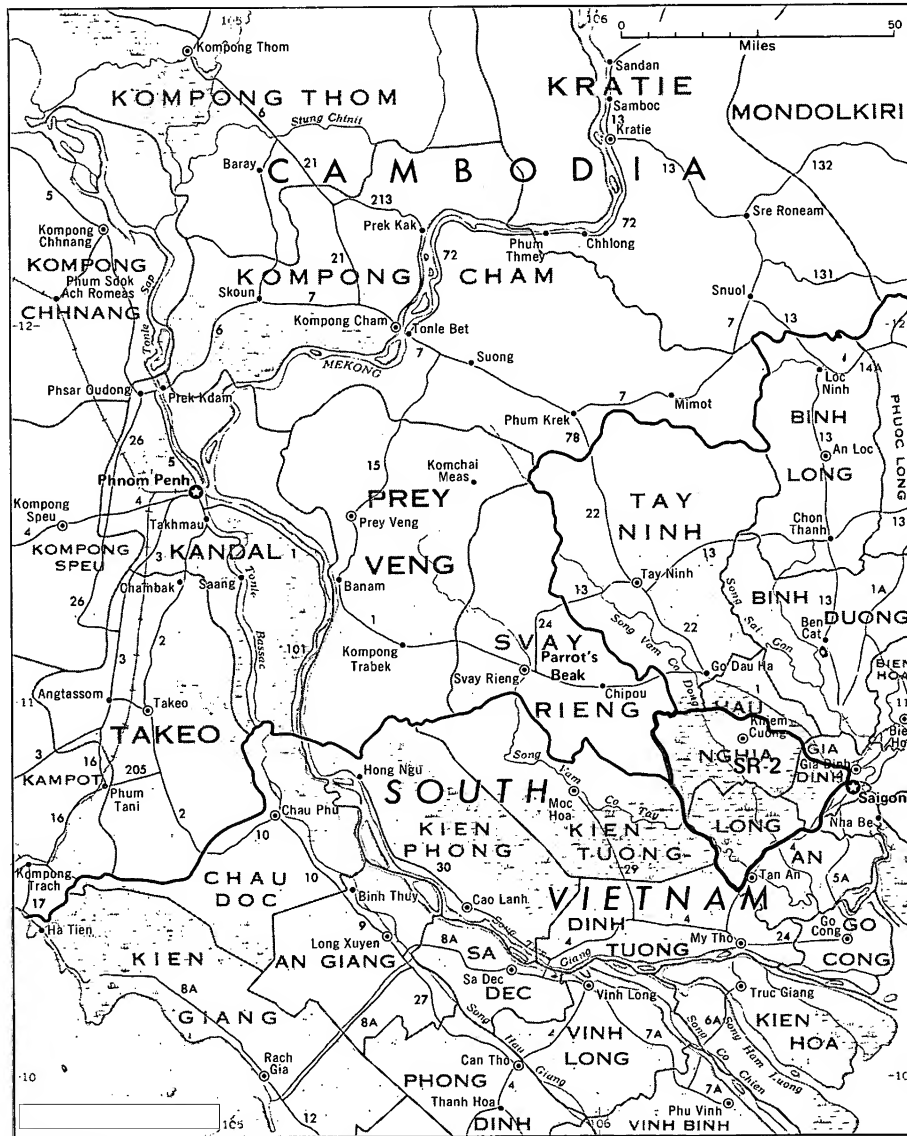


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Hanoi announced today that Prince Sihanouk will visit North Vietnam in the near future. The Foreign Ministry's communiqué gave no details on the length of the planned visit or its purpose.

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SOUTH VIETNAM

Communist forces that normally operate in one region just west of Saigon have been severely disrupted by allied operations into Cambodia. Reports from prisoners and defectors captured in this area indicate that allied attacks caused heavy enemy losses and left enemy forces in a state of disarray. One defector claimed several units, including Communist Sub-Region (SR-2) headquarters--at that time located in Cambodia--were largely destroyed by the initial South Vietnamese thrust across the border on 29 April.

Intercepted messages from units in SR-2 confirm that the enemy's political and military apparatus has been hit hard. One message estimated that 80 percent of the Communist guerrilla forces in that area had surrendered.

These losses cannot be made up quickly, and they almost certainly will put a crimp in Communist plans to harass allied units and to counter pacification efforts in the area west of Saigon. Meanwhile, SR-2 appears to be realigning its forces on a makeshift basis. Intercepts show that three understrength battalions have been dissolved and their personnel assigned to two remaining main force battalions. Several other units of battalion size have been broken up to reinforce Communist local forces.

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ISRAEL-LEBANON

The Lebanese Government is nervously awaiting further Israeli military action. Beirut officials are alleging that concentrations of Israeli troops have appeared on Lebanon's frontier. Mordechai Gazit, an Israeli Foreign Ministry official, yesterday denied that there was any "buildup," although he admitted there had been some "reinforcement" following recent incidents.

It is highly unlikely that the shelling of Lebanese villages will constitute Israel's sole response to Friday's fedayeen attack on the Israeli school bus. More retaliation, rather than inducing the Lebanese to crack down on the fedayeen, would only erode further the government's ability to oppose the fedayeen.

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CYPRUS

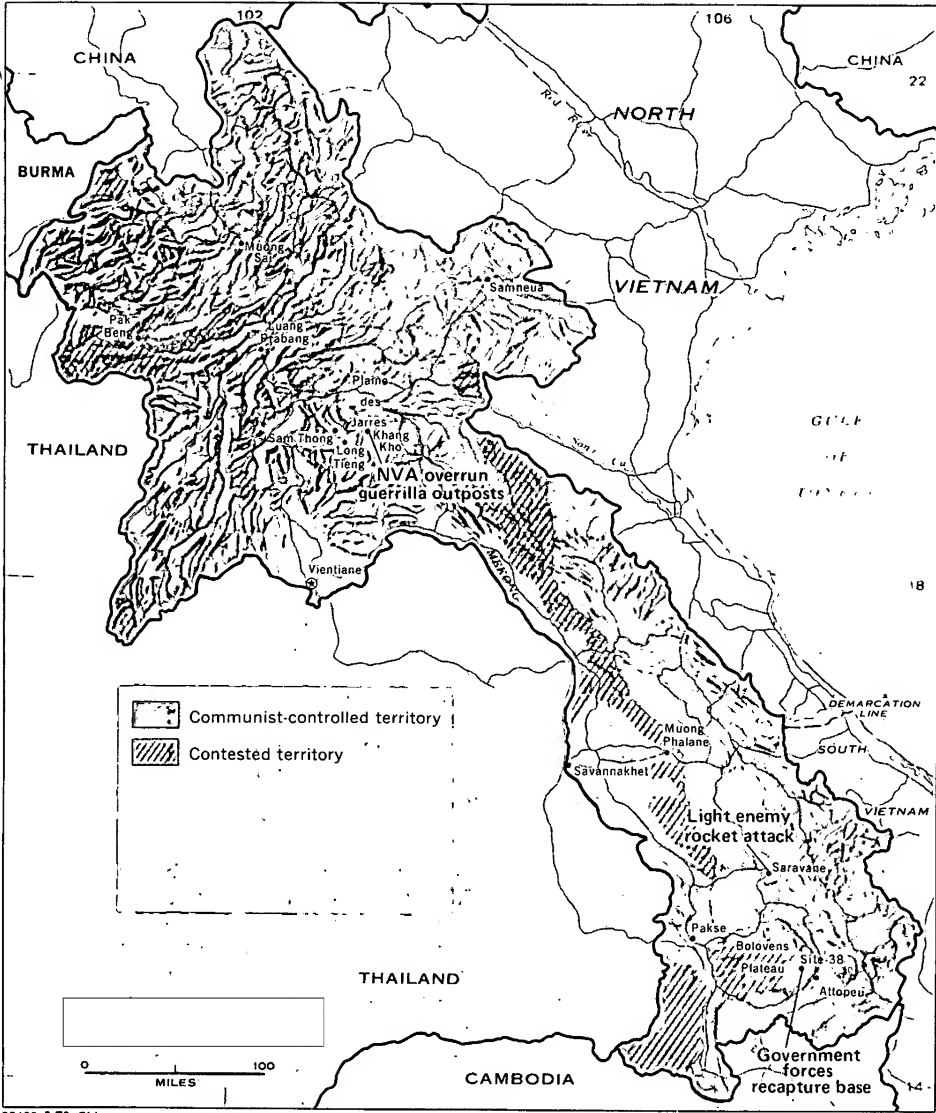
The government has arrested more than 30 Greek Cypriots who took part in a raid against a Limassol police station in the early hours of 23 May. Several members of the police and an army sergeant were among those arrested. The raiders are members of the National Front, an underground, anti-Communist group favoring union with Greece. This organization is responsible for earlier acts of antigovernment terrorism.

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Despite the government's apparently effective response to the most recent incident, the potential for renewed violence remains high as the Greek Cypriot community moves closer to parliamentary elections scheduled for 3 July. So far the Turkish Cypriot community has not been involved in the squabbles among the rival Greek Cypriot militant groups.

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Laos: Current Situation



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NOTES

Laos: Three companies of Laotian irregulars have recaptured Site 38, an important guerrilla base on the southeastern rim of the Bolovens Plateau that had been abandoned to Communist forces two weeks ago. Elsewhere in the south, the provincial capital of Saravane came under a light rocket attack, but no ground fighting has developed in the area. In the north, North Vietnamese forces overran the remaining guerrilla outposts near Khang Kho, thus diminishing the government's threat to enemy positions immediately south of the Plaine des Jarres.

Argentina: The police, using tear gas and water cannon, late last week put down violent student demonstrations in Rosario and Cordoba commemorating last year's riots. One labor group in Cordoba subsequently declared a "week of resistance" to culminate in an "active strike" on 29 May. If other labor groups join the movement, there could be a replay of last year's serious disturbances that occurred when students and labor joined forces.

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